

The Daniel Polhemus Farmhouse  
Near Phalanx  
Monmouth County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-693

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS  
N.J.  
13-Phalanx  
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The Daniel Polhemus Farmhouse  
Near Phalanx\*  
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Owner and occupant: George J. Fredericks

Date of Erection: 1730-1763; alterations 1941

Architect: Unknown (alterations by Francis A. Nelson,  
archt. 1941)

Builder: Daniel Polhemus (1706-1763) original owner

Present Condition: Original with renovations by  
present owner since survey. Front entrance  
doorway changed 1840-50, and again 1941.  
Compare drawings with photographs. Modern  
front porch

Number of Stories: Two and one-half over cellar in  
main unit; one and one-half over part cellar  
in wing; one in lean-to shed

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - fieldstone masonry  
Exterior walls - timber frame, brick-filled  
and mud-filled, shingle covered on wing,  
beaded edge clapboarded on main unit  
(changed to shingle since survey 1941)  
Interior walls - frame partitions, lathed  
and plastered; open beam ceilings  
Chimneys - brick, built into inside of  
gable end walls  
Roof - gable on main unit and wing; pitch  
on shed; all wood shingled under modern  
slate  
Windows - all new glass since surveyed

\* The house stands east of the road which leads south  
from Phalanx Road to Scobeyville, north of Yellow  
Brook.

### Historical Data:

The identification of this Dutch-Colonial house by discovery of the name of its original owner has been made by search of title through successive owners as recorded in the County Archives.

By deeds of lease and release, dated 16 and 17 May 1709, Lewis Morris of the manor of Morrisania in the Province of New York, Esquire, conveyed to seven Dutchmen, Ryk Hendrickse, Dominicus Vanderveer, Daniel Polhemus, Jacob Hendrickse, Auke Lefferts, Stephen Coerten and Johannes Polhemus, all of King's County in the said Province, yeomen, for 1730 Pounds New York money, the remaining 1372 acres of a tract "Commonly known by the name of the fifteen hundred acres," situated in Middletown Township, Monmouth County in the Province of New Jersey. The boundary line of the whole tract began "At a white oak tree standing about twenty rods from Swimming River," and continued thence N.N.W. almost 5 degrees more westerly 105 chains to a white oak tree on the bank of Hopp River thence S.W. and by W. 152 chains, thence S.W. to intersect a line running N.W. from a white oak on the bank of Swimming River, close by a sawmill belonging to Mr. Henry Leonard, thence along that line S.E. to the said oak tree, and thence along Swimming River to the point first mentioned. Three parcels had been previously sold from the whole 1500 acres viz. a strip 10 chains wide off the northeast end to the Rev. Alexander Jones, one in the southwest corner to John Tilton, "where he now dwells," and one on the north-west line to Samuel Tilton. (a)

Subsequently, by deed of 11 May 1711, the first five grantees named above, being still of King's County, New York, and the sixth, Auke Lefferts now of Middletown, Monmouth County, New Jersey, conveyed to

(a) Recorded in Monmouth County Deed Book G, pp. 139 and 149.

the seventh, Johannes<sup>3</sup> Polhemus<sup>(b)</sup> also then of the latter place, his seventh share lot of 167 in the said "1500 acres" tract, being 16½ chains wide and extending northwest from Swimming River the full width of the tract along its northeastern end and bounded southwest by the parcel allotted to (his father) the said Daniel<sup>2</sup> Polhemus<sup>(c)</sup>. The last named being still of Flatbush, L.I., conveyed his share, Lot. No. 6, containing 164 acres, to his said son Johannes<sup>3</sup> Polhemus of Middletown Township by deed of 4 March 1718, for 225 pounds<sup>(d)</sup>.

Having thus acquired adjacent two of the seven lots, the latter improved the previously unoccupied acreage as his homestead farm.\* No record of his disposition of the same by will or deed is found, but the same property, or part of it, is found next in possession of his son Daniel (1706-1763). The house thereon, here considered,

(b) Johannes<sup>3</sup> Polhemus, son of Daniel<sup>2</sup> Polhemus of Flatbush, Kings County, Long Island, New York and his wife Neeltje Vanderveer (who were mar. 13 Aug. 1685), grandson of the emigrant, the Rev. Johannes Theodorus Polhemus of Kings County, (who d. there 8 June 1676), removed thence to Middletown Township, Monmouth County, New Jersey, 1709-1711, and d. there at date not found (no probate on his estate on record) having issue by wife (supposed Johanna or Annatie Ten Eyck) viz. Elizabeth 1710, Cornelis 1714, Daniel, Tobias and John (T. G. Bergen, Register of the Early Settlers of Kings County, New York, publ. 1881, p. 226).

(c) Mon. Co. Deed Book G, p. 127

(d) Mon. Co. Deed Book G, p. 128

\* Existence and location of the house of this progenitor has not been sought in relation to the house here surveyed. There are other known Polhemus homesteads in the vicinity thereof, between Phalanx and Scobeyville.

bears the evidence of design and erection during the latter's lifetime, probably soon after his marriage which took place about 1730.

Thus by will dated 21 September 1763 and proved 2 December following, Daniel<sup>4</sup> Polhemus of Middletown Township devised the use of the "farm where I live" to his wife Margaret; a farm in Shrewsbury, same county, to a son John (he paying 300 Pounds to testator's daughter Elinor, wife of Peter Covenhoven); a farm in Freehold, same county, to a son Albert (he paying 300 Pounds to testator's daughter Annatie); and "the farm where I live to a son Tobias (he paying 300 Pounds to testator's daughter Mary); with the balance of the estate to the six children.(e)

Tobias<sup>5</sup> Polhemus (1740-1826), son and devisee abovenamed, held the ancestral homestead(f) and bequeathed it by will proved in 1826 to his son

- (e) Abstract of Will publ. in N. J. Archives XXXIII, 333. Daniel<sup>4</sup> Polhemus d. 26 September 1763 aged 57 years, having mar. about 1730 Margaret Couwenhoven who d. 17 June 1780 aged 70 years, daughter of Albert Willemse Couwenhoven of Pleasant Valley and of vicinity of Freehold. (N. Y. Geneal. & Biogr. Record, 1940, p. 161. Inscriptions from gravestones in Polhemus family cemetery on the homestead near Scobeyville, publ. in Geo. C. Beekman, Early Dutch Settlers of Monmouth County, N. J., 1901, p. 84).
- (f) Hon. Daniel Polhemus Van Dorn (1853-Assemblyman from Monmouth Co.) whose mother was a daughter of Daniel Polhemus who owned and lived on the homestead at Phalanx in Atlantic Township, says he often heard his grandfather tell the story of his father, Tobias Polhemus incarceration in the old sugar house prison during the Revolutionary War. (G.C. Beekman, Early Dutch Settlers of Mon. Co., N.J., 1901, p. 12). Tobias<sup>5</sup> Polhemus d. 24 Aug. 1826, aged 86 yrs., having mar. Mary Schanck who d. 17 July 1826 aged 69, dau. of Garret G. Schanck. His son Daniel T. Polhemus d. 1st Oct. 1826, having mar. 1st Catharine Couwenhoven who d. 20 June 1797, dau. of Cornelius and 2nd Sarah Van Dyke who d. 7 Feb. 1857 aged 88.(Beekman, cited before, p. 84).

Daniel T.<sup>6</sup> Polhemus. The latter died intestate in the same year, and in July 1827 his administrators obtained a court order for the sale of his real estate, described therein as the "Farm or plantation whereon the said Daniel T. Polhemus formerly lived, together with the Mill Farm, containing together about 425 acres," with two other small lots. By deed of 23 January 1834, his three daughters, Catharine, Margaret and Ellenor, with their respective husbands William Van Doren, John C. Schanck and Garret Van Dever, all of Freehold Township, sold and conveyed their title to his real estate to their brothers Tobias<sup>7</sup> and Garret S.<sup>7</sup> Polhemus of Middletown Township, for \$3000. On 22 November 1839, said Garret S. Polhemus and wife gave their deed of quit claim to said Tobias<sup>7</sup> Polhemus, conveying to him "that farm or plantation lying on the road leading from Sandyview to Colts Neck" in Middletown Township.

Having thus come into sole possession of the ancestral farm, Tobias<sup>7</sup> Polhemus held and occupied the same until his death on 22 December 1891, intestate, leaving as heirs his issue: Emeline Conover of Red Bank, Henry M. Polhemus of Broderick, New Jersey, Rachel A. Lloyd of Brooklyn, M. Van Dyke Polhemus of Holmdel, N. J., Sarah Ladd of Brooklyn, M. Van Dyke Polhemus of Holmdel, New Jersey, Sarah Ladd of Brooklyn, John H. Polhemus of Scobeyville, N. J., Mary H. Taylor of Holmdel, and Daniel T. Polhemus of Keyport, New Jersey. The administrator of his estate sold the homestead farm of 119½ acres, on which he "resided at the time of his death," to the son John H.<sup>8</sup> Polhemus of Atlantic Township<sup>(g)</sup> by deed of 15 December 1892, describing it as having a frontage of some 2167 feet on the east side of the road from Scobeyville to Applegate's Saw Mill and bounding south on a brook (Yellow Brook branch of Swimming River).

John H.<sup>8</sup> Polhemus who thus came into full possession of the farm, owned and occupied the same until his death, and by his will dated 21 March 1914

(g) Atlantic Township, incorporated 1847 from parts of Freehold, Middletown and Shrewsbury Twps., thence included this Polhemus farm.

and proved 11th May 1927, devised the use thereof to his widow, Amanda C. Polhemus<sup>(h)</sup> during her lifetime, and granted power to his executors to sell and convey any or all of his real estate.

Accordingly, by deed of 23 April 1940, the widow executrix conveyed the farm here considered to George J. Fredericks of Upper Montclair, New Jersey, excepting some 16 acres previously sold to the Tintern Manor Water Company in 1916, and he remained as owner at the time of our survey of the house in January 1941. Such alterations as are here noted and shown in the accompanying photographs were made since for the owner by Francis A. Nelson, architect, also of Upper Montclair, New Jersey. Mr. Fredericks occupies the house at the time of this writing.

Reference:

A search of title in Monmouth County records by James Hanlon, H.A.B.S. abstractor, reported 1 April 1941

*Lewis D. Cook*

Supervising Historian 12 May 1941

Approved:

*Seymour Williams*

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer

- (h) Mrs. John H. Polhemus, in whose possession are the original deeds of 1709 and 1718, cited in note (a), resides with daughter Mrs. E. I. Oakley in Red Bank, Monmouth County, N.J., 1941. The latter recites verbal tradition that the erection of this house was delayed a year by the British army being camped on the site during the Revolution (1776-1783) and using the cut lumber for fires. However, the design and details of the house are those of pre-Revolution date.